



**NEW ENGLAND
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Released Items
2007**

**Grade 8
Writing**

Writing—Session 1

- ❶ Which word in the sentence below should be capitalized?

My class assignment was to describe how my local government worked, so I made an appointment with mayor Demers.

- A. class
- B. local
- C. government
- D. mayor

- ❷ Where should a comma be placed in the sentence below?

Most goods were carried to other parts of the country by sailing ships canal barges, or wagons.

- A. after *goods*
- B. after *carried*
- C. after *country*
- D. after *ships*

- ❸ How should the underlined word in the sentence below be spelled?

For vacation next summer I'm hoping my family will take a trip thorough the desert.

- A. threw
- B. thru
- C. thorough
- D. through

- ❹ What is the **best** way to combine the two sentences below?

The Texas State Railroad is one of the largest steam train operations. This railroad line was built in 1893.

- A. A railroad line was built in 1893, the Texas State Railroad, and is one of the largest steam train operations.
- B. The Texas State Railroad, built in 1893, is one of the largest steam train operations.
- C. The Texas State Railroad is one of the largest steam train operations and it was built in 1893.
- D. In 1893 was built the Texas State Railroad, one of the largest steam train operations.

5 Which edit is needed in the sentence below?

In the spring of 2002, an iceberg twice the size of Rhode island broke off from Antarctica.

- A. Change *spring* to **Spring**.
- B. Change *iceberg* to **Iceberg**.
- C. Change *island* to **Island**.
- D. Change *Antarctica* to **antarctica**.

6 Which edit is needed in the sentence below?

I believe that it makes no difference weather or not we go later.

- A. Change *believe* to **beleive**.
- B. Change *difference* to **differance**.
- C. Change *weather* to **whether**.
- D. Change *later* to **latter**.

7 What is the correct form of the underlined word in the sentence below?

They have sing in the chorus ever since they were in eighth grade.

- A. *singed*
- B. *sang*
- C. *sung*
- D. *sanged*

8 What is the **best** way to combine the two sentences below?

Many writers now use computers. Computers can hold a lot more information than notebooks.

- A. Many writers now use computers because computers can hold a lot more information than notebooks.
- B. Unlike notebooks, many writers now use computers that can hold a lot of information.
- C. Computers for many writers can hold a lot more information than notebooks.
- D. Many writers now use computers, computers can hold a lot more information than notebooks.

9 Which edit is needed in the sentence below?

I hope the school's auditorium is still full when the last group of singers performs it's last songs!

- A. Change *school's* to **schools**.
- B. Change *singers* to **singer's**.
- C. Change *it's* to **its**.
- D. Change *songs* to **song's**.

10 Which of the following is a sentence fragment?

- A. Some scientists worry that the size of recent icebergs is related to global warming.
- B. An iceberg part of a glacier that breaks off and then is set adrift on the ocean.
- C. This process is called "calving," and people travel to cold places every year to watch it.
- D. There is conflict between tour guides and people who mine glaciers for water.

When writing responses to prompts 11, 12, and 13, remember to

- **read the prompt carefully,**
- **develop a complete response to the prompt,**
- **proofread and edit your writing, and**
- **write only in the space provided.**

Read this passage and think about what advice Jenny Benson would give to young soccer players. Then write a response to the prompt that follows.

Having a Ball

Jen Bryant

When Jenny Benson was eight, her mother took her to soccer practice for the first time.

“She’s never played soccer before,” Mrs. Benson told the coach. “I’m not sure how she’ll do.” . . .

Today, Jenny plays fullback for the Philadelphia Charge, a team in the Women’s United Soccer Association (WUSA). This professional league was formed in 2000, soon after the United States women’s amateur team won the World Cup.

When the WUSA was being formed, league officials watched many college soccer games, looking for players who were good enough to join the league. They were very interested in Jenny, who played for the University of Nebraska.

“Throughout that college season, I knew I was being watched,” Jenny says. “I knew I couldn’t be perfect, so I just tried to be very consistent and have fun.”

As a professional, Jenny still relies on her focused but fun-loving attitude. “In a game, I try never to put too much pressure on myself. The more I concentrate on having fun, the better I play,” she says.

Jenny isn’t the biggest or strongest player in the league, or even on her team. “But I play as if I am the biggest and strongest,” she says. “You have to believe in yourself. I have good and bad days, just like everyone else, but I know the sun will always come up after a bad day. That helps me get through anything.”

- 11** Based on the passage, what helpful advice might Jenny Benson give to young soccer players? Write a paragraph describing the advice and explaining why it might be helpful.

- 12 Do you think that people should be allowed to get their driver's license at age 14? Write a paragraph that develops **one** strong argument supporting your position.

Read this story and think about how you would end it. Then write a response to the prompt that follows.

The Cleverest Son

Once there lived an old man who had three sons. When he grew old and ill and knew that he soon would die, he called all three sons into his room.

“There is no way I can divide the house and farm to support all three of you. The one who proves himself the cleverest will inherit the house and farm. There is a coin on the table for each of you. The one who can buy something that will fill this room will inherit all I own.”

The eldest son took his coin, went straight to the marketplace, and filled his wagon full of straw. The second son thought a bit longer, then also went to the marketplace, where he bought sacks and sacks of feathers. The youngest son thought and then quietly went to a little shop. He bought two small things and tucked them into his pocket.

That night the father called them in to show what they had bought. The eldest son spread his straw about the floor, but it filled only one part of the room. The second son dumped out his sacks of feathers, but they filled only two corners of the room. Then the youngest son smiled, pulled the two small things out of his pocket, and soon filled the room.

- 13 Describe how the youngest son filled the room and then end the story.

Writing—Session 2

A student wrote this fact sheet comparing television in 1965 to television today. Read the fact sheet and then write a response to the prompt that follows.

Television Then and Now

Television in 1965 and Now

- only three major television networks in 1965: NBC, CBS, and ABC
- NBC began in 1926 as a radio network
- top five shows in 1965–1966:
 - Bonanza*, an hour-long Western
 - Gomer Pyle, USMC*, a half-hour comedy about a private in the Marines
 - The Lucy Show*, a half-hour comedy
 - The Red Skelton Hour*, an hour-long comedy show with a comic and guest stars
 - Batman*, a half-hour series about a comic book hero
- in 1965, many television series dealt with spies; there were many Westerns on TV
- political ads for presidential campaigns had just become common
- most television shows broadcast in color, not in black and white
- in 1964, 94% of American households had televisions; now 98% do
- in 1964, 7% of televisions were color; now 99% are
- in 1964, 2.4% of households used cable; about 70% do now. Cable was used in areas where it was difficult to get a good television signal
- no VCRs and DVD players. Today over 90% of households have access to a VCR
- in 1965 average television operated 5 hours and 30 minutes a day. Now average television operates 7 hours a day

Use information from the fact sheet and your own knowledge to write a report that compares television in 1965 and television today.

Use the questions in the box below to organize your writing. You can answer the questions **before** you write to plan your response or **after** you write to check your response. What you write in the **Student Answer Booklet** will be included as part of your score.

14 What is the focus/controlling idea of your report? _____

15 What are the supporting details in your report? _____

16 What is the conclusion to your report? _____

When writing a response to prompt 17, remember to

- **read the prompt carefully,**
- **develop a complete response to the prompt,**
- **proofread and edit your writing, and**
- **write only in the space provided.**

17 Use information from the fact sheet and your own knowledge to write a report that compares television in 1965 and television today.

Acknowledgments

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Grade 8 Writing Released Item Information

| Released Item Number | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Content Strand ¹ | SC | SC | SC | SC | SC | SC | SC | SC | SC | SC | IR | PW | NW | RW | RW | RW | RW |
| GLE Code | 7-9 | 7-9 | 7-9 | 7-1 | 7-9 | 7-9 | 7-9 | 7-1 | 7-9 | 7-9 | 7-2 | 7-8 | 7-4 | 7-8 | 7-8 | 7-8 | 7-8 |
| Depth of Knowledge Code | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Item Type ² | MC | MC | MC | MC | MC | MC | MC | MC | MC | MC | CR | CR | CR | SA | SA | SA | ER |
| Answer Key | D | D | D | B | C | C | C | A | C | B | | | | | | | |
| Total Possible Points | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 12 |

¹Content Strand: SC = Structures of Language & Writing Conventions. Short Responses — IR = Response to Informational Text,
PW = Persuasive Writing, NW = Narrative Writing. Extended Response — RW = Report Writing

²Item Type: MC = Multiple Choice, CR = Constructed Response, SA = Short Answer, ER = Writing Prompt